

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 07524 142130Z

13-11

ACTION ARA-10

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USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 7524

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJECT: MRS. PERON'S SITUATION

REFS: BA-7477 B) BA-7404 C) BA-6087 D) BA-6699

1. MRS. PERON LEFT HOSPITAL AND RETURNED TO OLIVOS RESIDENCE AT 10:30 LAST NIGHT (NOV 13). AT NOON SHE HAD MET WITH CABINET (FOR FIRST TIME SINCE LATE OCT) IN HOSPITAL ROOM. AT THAT TIME THERE WAS NO DEFINITE INDICATION SHE WAS PREPARING TO LEAVE HOSPITAL--THOUGH THERE HAD BEEN SPECULATION FOR PAST TWO DAYS THAT SHE MIGHT LEAVE AT ANY TIME.

2. WHAT MAY HAVE PROMPTED HER FINALLY TO RETURN TO OLIVOS WAS DEMAND FOR CLARIFICATION REPORTEDLY VOICED TO INTERIOR MIN ROBLEDO BY LEADERS OF SENATE OPPOSITION BLOCS IN MEETING WITH HIM EARLIER SAME DAY. OPPOSITION LEADERS REPORTEDLY POINTED TO FACT THAT THERE HAS BEEN TOTAL VACUUM IN PRESIDENCY FOR PAST TEN DAYS WITH PRESIDENT INCOMMUNICADO IN HOSPITAL NOT ATTENDING TO ANY OFFICIAL DUTIES AND NO ONE APPOINTED TO FILL IN FOR HER. UNLESS SITUATION IMMEDIATELY RECTIFIED, THEY THREATENED TO HAVE PANEL OF DOCTORS APPOINTED BY CONGRESS TO EXAMINE HER AND DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT SHE PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY CAPABLE OF EXERCISING OFFICE.

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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BUENOS 07524 142130Z

3. IMMEDIATELY AFTER SHE MET WITH CABINET, RUMORS BEGAN CONCERNING POSSIBLE CABINET CHANGES--SPECIFICALLY THAT ROBLEDO, ARAUZ CASTEX AND VOTTERO WILL BE FIRED, MINISTERS THEMSELVES HAVE DENIED RUMORS, BUT NOT VERY CONVINCINGLY.

4. EMBASSY TOLD BY ONE PERONIST ANTIVERTICALISTA SOURCE CLOSELY CONNECTED TO CALABRO AND LUIS RUBEO THAT THREE MILITARY COMMANDERS HAVE DECIDED TO DEMAND THAT MRS. PERON RESIGN, AND, IF SHE REFUSES, TO PLACE HER UNDER HOUSE ARREST PENDING TRIAL FOR MALFEASANCE AND IMMORALITY IN OFFICE.

5. EMBASSY BELIEVES THIS REPORT IS PROBABLY AN EXAGGERATION. CALABRO PEOPLE MAY WELL BELIEVE IT, HOWEVER, AND THIS WOULD EXPLAIN CALABRO'S ENIGMATIC REFERENCE TO "ONLY A FEW MORE HOURS" (SEE REF A). WHILE WE DOUBT THAT SUCH DEFINITE DECISION HAS BEEN MADE, ARMED FORCES DO INDEED SEEM TO BE MOVING IN THIS DIRECTION. CLEARLY, CIVILIANS CANNOT SOLVE PROBLEM BY THEMSELVES. THERE IS STILL TALK OF IMPEACHMENT AND INVESTIGATIONS, BUT CULMINATION THESE PROCESSES CANNOT BE EXPECTED FOR SOME TIME. MOST BELIEVE TIME RUNNING OUT AND THAT NO MATTER HOW MUCH PRESSURE CIVILIANS BRING TO BEAR AGAINST MRS. PERON THROUGH LEGAL MEANS, SHE LIKELY TO REFUSE TO RESIGN. ROBLEDO, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS REPORTEDLY PROMISED CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS THAT HE WILL CONVINCE HER TO RESIGN OR TAKE LEAVE OF ABSENCE, BUT IN FACT THAT HE CAN DO SO SEEMS MOST UNLIKELY. INDEED, HE MAY BE FIRED FOR HIS TROUBLES. HENCE, IF SHE IS TO BE OUSTED QUICKLY, MILITARY WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO LEND A HAND. INDEED, ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE CLOSE TO VIDELA, MILITARY WERE AWARE OF THIS AND FULLY RECOGNIZED THAT CIVILIANS COULD NOT DO IT ALONE EVEN AS THEY (MILITARY) WERE SPREADING WORD LAST WEEK THAT CIVILIANS SHOULD NOT EXPECT MILITARY TO SOLVE PROBLEM FOR THEM (SEE REF B). ACCORDING TO SOURCE, MILITARY SPREAD THAT WORD IN ORDER (A) TO SPUR CIVILIANS ON TO DO AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, AND (B) TO IMPROVE TACTICAL POSITION OF MILITARY FOR MOMENT WHEN THEY HAD TO TAKE ACTION.

6. ALL MILITARY OFFICERS (AND MOST POLITICIANS) WITH WHOM DAO AND EMBOFFS HAVE SPOKEN DURING PAST FEW DAYS HAVE STATED CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BUENOS 07524 142130Z

FLATLY THAT MRS. PERON MUST GO AND GO SOON, AND HAVE INDICATED "PLANTEO" (DEMAND FOR RESIGNATION) AS MOST LIKELY DEVICE. SOME HAVE MENTIONED POSSIBILITY OF JOINT DEMARCHE ON PART OF THREE ARMED FORCES COMMANDERS AND CIVILIAN LEADERS. OTHERS BELIEVE MILITARY MORE LIKELY TO GO IT ALONE.

7. SOME SOURCES CONTINUE TO INSIST THAT ONCE IT MOVES, MILITARY WILL BE COMPELLED TO ITSELF TAKE POWER, RATHER THAN LEAVING

IT IN CIVILIAN HANDS. MOST MILITARY OFFICERS WITH WHOM DAO AND EMBOFFS HAVE SPOKEN, HOWEVER, HAVE INDICATED PREFERENCE FOR REMAINING WITHIN CONSTITUTION AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE AND LEAVING POWER IN CIVILIAN HANDS--AT LEAST INITIALLY. THEY DO NOT DISCOUNT POSSIBILITY (OR MORE THAN THAT) THAT MILITARY WILL TAKE OVER AT LATER STAGE. AS ONE ADMIRAL PUT IT AT SOCIAL FUNCTION LAST NIGHT: "WE MUST LET PERONIST RUN ITS COURSE, BUT FIRST WE MUST REMOVE MRS. PERON SO THAT COUNTRY DOESN'T SINK IN THE PROCESS."

8. COMMENT: WHILE MRS. PERON'S OUSTER MAKES BETTER THEATER, MORE IMPORTANT QUESTION, AS INDICATED IN REFS C AND D, CONTINUES TO BE WHO AND WHAT WILL REPLACE HER. FURTHER, EVEN IF MILITARY INITIALLY LEAVE POWER IN CIVILIAN HANDS--AS THEY EARNESTLY WISH TO DO--CONCLUSIONS OF REF C REMAIN VALID--I.E. THAT CIVILIAN/ CONSTITUTIONALIST FORCES HAVE ONLY 40/60 CHANCE OF GETTING THROUGH TO NEXT ELECTIONS. THEIR CHANCES WOULD BE IMPROVED, HOWEVER, IF ELECTIONS WERE ADVANCED TO NOV OF 1976.
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